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Human rights questions: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Security Council
Fifty-eighth year

Letter dated 10 December 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 10 December 2003, addressed to you by Reşat Çağlar, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 117 (a) and (b), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ümit **Pamir**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

03-65831 (E) 191203

Annex to the letter dated 10 December 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

10 December 2003

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to refer to the letter dated 17 November 2003 addressed to you by the Greek Cypriot Representative to the United Nations, which was circulated as a document of the General Assembly and of the Security Council (A/58/603-S/2003/1101), and to bring to your kind attention the following pertinent facts concerning the matter.

The Greek Cypriot Representative in his present letter, as in his last letter, has chosen to make hasty baseless allegations which will no doubt be refuted by developments and emerging facts. It should be recalled that the allegations of the Greek Cypriot Representative in relation to the daily *Afrika* newspaper were dealt with in my previous letter. Unlike the rushed conclusions of the Greek Cypriot representative, the said newspaper continues to operate freely with full and unhindered participation of all its personnel and journalists, which corroborates once again the fact that the politically motivated allegations of the Greek Cypriot Representative were completely unfounded. The said newspaper, together with two State-owned and four privately owned television channels, three university-run, eight private and three State-owned radio stations, 11 daily newspapers and various other publications, are free to propagate any political thought and opinion in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus subject only to the laws of defamation and libel, as in any other country. It should therefore be stressed once again that the people of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus enjoy to the full the freedom of the press and the freedoms of expression, speech and assembly, and that such rights are enshrined in and protected by the Constitution of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Indeed, this is confirmed by various human rights reports of independent organizations as well as the annual human rights reports of the United States Department of State, including the most recent one released on 31 March 2003.

Unfortunately, the Greek Cypriot Representative, who is well aware of the nature and the quality of our democracy, continues in his present letter with his politically motivated and slanderous accusations. Regarding fictitious cases mentioned in his letter, the truth of the matter is that a State prosecutor has initiated a preliminary investigation into the claims that in their articles the journalists in question have violated the libel and defamation laws of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Contrary to the claims of the Greek Cypriot Representative, the involvement, at this stage, of any court is out of the question. In a democratic environment, it is true that adherence to and protection of the freedom of the press and the freedoms of expression and speech are among the main responsibilities of a State towards its citizens. It is also true that protecting its citizens' dignity as well as the dignity of the institutions that the State is built around is a responsibility of no lesser importance.

It is obvious that the aim of these baseless allegations of the Greek Cypriot representative is to divert the attention from the real issues prevailing in the island, in particular, the continuation of the all-embracing embargoes imposed on the Turkish Cypriot people and the totally negative position adopted by the Greek

Cypriot administration vis-à-vis the confidence-building measures of the Turkish Cypriot side. Mr. Mavroyiannis may diligently try to create a smoke screen in order to reduce the impact of the latest revelations of the Greek Cypriot leadership. He cannot, however, hide the fact that the following two excerpts from recent admissions by the Greek Cypriot leadership are the epitome of the insincerity and bad faith displayed in the negotiating process by the Greek Cypriot side throughout these years. Although such revelations have not surprised the Turkish Cypriot side, our hope is that they would help the international community to better judge the parties in Cyprus. Tassos Papadopoulos, the incumbent Greek Cypriot leader, and Glafcos Clerides, his predecessor, recently went public with the truth.

Mr. Papadopoulos has said and I quote:

> "I would not have signed the United Nations document (for a Cyprus settlement) event if Denktaş had" (the Greek Cypriot daily, *Politis*, 23 November 2003).

Mr. Clerides, so as not to be perceived as a less intransigent thus less patriotic leader than his successor before Greek Cypriot public opinion, hastily revealed the following:

> "*We have achieved our objective of European Union membership without accepting anything and without making any concessions (at the negotiations) and putting the blame for the failure (of the talks) on the Turkish side*" (the Greek Cypriot daily, *Mahi*, 1 December 2003).

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 117 (a) and (b), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Reşat **Çağlar**
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus